

Message Text

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SUBJECT: POST RELATIONSHIP WITH ECUADOREAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

REF: STATE 094266

1. EMBASSY MAINTAINS CLOSE AND CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP WITH ECUADOREAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, QUITO. EMBASSY IS IN FACT LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS EXISTENCE. FOLLOWING BACKGROUND MAY BE OF INTEREST TO DEPARTMENT.

2. DURING EARLY 1970'S, EMBASSY HOSTED MONTHLY LUNCHEONS AT LOCAL HOTEL FOR U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN QUITO. HOWEVER, AS COMMERCIAL SECTION UNDERTOOK HEAVIER EXPORT PROMOTION COMMITMENT IN 1973, LITTLE TIME COULD BE GIVEN TO ORGANIZING THESE LUNCHEONS AND LOCATING GUEST SPEAKERS, AND LUNCHEONS BECAME LESS FREQUENT. IN SUMMER OF 1973, COMATT, RECOGNIZING POSSIBLE VALUE OF AN INDEPENDENT AMCHAM WHICH WOULD TAKE OVER THIS FUNCTION AS WELL AS ASSIST IN PROMOTING CLOSER U.S.-ECUADOREAN TRADE, BEGAN SURVEYING LOCAL U.S. COMPANIES AND ECUADOREAN CHAMBER OFFICIALS TO ELICIT SUPPORT. IT WAS EVIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT LOCAL U.S. BUSINESSMEN WERE TOO FEW TO MAKE A SEPARATE AMCHAM VIABLE, AND PLANNING ORIENTED TOWARD A CHAMBER IN WHICH BOTH ECUADOREANS AND AMERICANS WOULD BE WELCOME AS MEMBERS. IN DECEMBER

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1973, GROUP OF PROMINENT ECUADOREAN BUSINESSMEN, INCLUD-

ING PAST PRESIDENT OF FEDERATION OF ECUADOREAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, PAID CALL ON AMBASSADOR TO URGE SUPPORT FOR AN ECUADOREAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ECUAME). AMBASSADOR INSTRUCTED COMATT TO PROCEED WITH ORGANIZING ACTIVITY, AND BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND MAY, 1974, ORGANIZING COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF COMATT AND LOCAL ECUADOREAN AND U.S. BUSINESSMEN MET BI-WEEKLY AT PRIVATE RESIDENCES TO DEFINE STRUCTURE AND DRAFT BY-LAWS OF ORGANIZATION.

3. ECUAME OFFICIALLY CAME INTO EXISTENCE IN JUNE 1974 AT LUNCHEON DURING WHICH LEADING ECUADOREAN BUSINESSMEN AND ENTREPRENEUR, ANTONIO GRANDA CENTENO, AND AMERICAN MANAGER OF FNCB WERE ELECTED PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT RESPECTIVELY. BY-LAWS STATE THAT COMATT OF U.S. EMBASSY IS EX-OFICIO MEMBER OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WHICH MEETS MONTHLY. CHAMBER BEGAN ORGANIZING MONTHLY LUNCHEONS FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN LATE 1974, WITH GUEST SPEAKER SELECTED FROM UPPER ECHELONS OF PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTOR AND GOE. ATTENDANCE AVERAGES 120 PER MONTH. ECUAME NOW BOASTS RESPECTABLE MEMBERSHIP OF 200 COMPANIES OR INDIVIDUALS, ROUGHLY ONE-THIRD OF WHICH ARE U.S., AND IS AIMING FOR 300. IT PUBLISHES MONTHLY BULLETIN, OFFERS MEMBERS TELETYPE SERVICE, A LIBRARY, AND VARIOUS COMMERCIAL CONTACT SERVICES THROUGH MEMBERSHIP IN AACCLA AND U.S. CHAMBER IN WASHINGTON.

4. EMBASSY INITIALLY PROVIDED VARIOUS FORMS OF ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS NAMES OF LOCAL U.S. BUSINESSMEN AND SUBSIDIARIES, TRANSLATION SERVICE, LOAN OF NATIONAL FLAGS, ETC., AND CONTINUES TO ASSIST IN VARIOUS OTHER WAYS, SUCH AS DONATION OF REFERENCE BOOKS FOR ECUAME LIBRARY AS EMBASSY REPLACES THESE WITH LATEST EDITIONS. AMBASSADOR WAS AMONG FIRST GUEST SPEAKERS, AND HE AND/OR DCM HAVE REGULARLY ATTENDED MONTHLY LUNCHEONS AND MADE POINT OF INVITING MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO VARIOUS COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS. ADDITIONALLY, COMATT REGULARLY ATTENDS BOARD MEETINGS, AND EMBASSY IS ALWAYS WELL-REPRESENTED AT MONTHLY LUNCHEONS OF FULL MEMBERSHIP.

5. THE EMBASSY AND ECUAME WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER IN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND SERVICES. THERE IS MUTUAL EXCHANGE
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OF INFORMATION ON NEW U.S. BUSINESS VISITORS AND THEIR INTERESTS, AND U.S. TRADE DEVELOPMENTS. ECUAME'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AN AMCIT, HAS PROVEN HELPFUL IN LOCATING LOCAL AGENTS/DISTRIBUTORS FOR NTM U.S. FIRMS. ECUAME ALSO PLAYS ACTIVE ROLE IN SUCH OTHER ACTIVITIES AS EMBASSY'S BICENTENNIAL PROGRAM, JULY 4TH ACTIVITIES, AND LOCATING EMPLOYMENT FOR ECUADOREAN STUDENTS RETURNING FROM STUDIES IN U.S.

6. AT SAME TIME, EMBASSY HAS EMPHASIZED TO CHAMBER THAT LATTER IS INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION, FREE TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS. EMBASSY ABSTAINS FROM INVOLVEMENT IN ANY LOCAL POLITICAL ISSUES IN WHICH ECUAME MAY TAKE SIDES. THE RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN FRUITFUL. AS CHAMBER HAS GAINED PROMINENCE, WE HAVE TRIED TO STEP GRACEFULLY ASIDE AND LET IT CARRY ITS OWN WEIGHT. RESULTS HAVE BEEN POSITIVE: NOT ONLY CLOSER AND BETTER CONTACT BETWEEN U.S. AND ECUADOREAN COMMUNITIES BUT ALSO--WE LIKE TO THINK---ENHANCED IMAGE OF THIS EMBASSY FOR ITS ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE CHAMBER.

7. TO THOSE POSTS WHICH DO NOT ALREADY HAVE A CHAMBER, WE RECOMMEND ON BASIS OF OUR OWN EXPERIENCE THAT THEY ACTIVELY ASSIST IN ORGANIZING ONE.
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